

Coaching Culture Mini Guide



Did you know?

The word “coach” stems from “stagecoach”. So, fundamentally a coach is there as a means for someone to get from where they are to where they want to be. Coaching culture takes that concept and applies it to the workplace; at the most basic level, it’s about empowering your team to succeed.

How to build a coaching culture:

Establish safety.

This means true psychological safety where people feel they can learn, contribute, and grow. There are three ways to build psychological safety:

- ① **Actively listen** — ask open-ended questions and, listen for the answer, repeat back what they say to confirm you’re on the same page.
- ② **Be transparent and vulnerable** — when possible, talk about work and company processes without an agenda. Acknowledge your shortcomings and mistakes. When you are transparent and vulnerable, others feel empowered because they will be less afraid of failure.
- ③ **Seek out dissent** — we’re not talking about disrespect, but rather allowing others to express the minority view and challenge the status quo. Dissent is a good sign because it means people feel they can.

Cultivate curiosity.

Both the coach and the one being coached must be curious.

When you encourage curiosity, you are supporting:

- ① **Humility** — a modest view of one's own ability or importance.
- ② **Flexibility** — willing to stretch by a motivation to seek new knowledge and experiences.
- ③ **Adaptability** — eager to embrace the novel, uncertain, and unpredictable.

Embrace discomfort.

There cannot be change without challenge. While we may theoretically accept this notion, this is a time when many quit, i.e., right before a breakthrough. And this isn't just true of the person being coached. Coaches often feel the discomfort too and will bail their mentee out. So whether coaching or being coached, here's how you can embrace discomfort:

- ① **Acknowledge it** — First, acknowledge the discomfort to yourself, and then verbally to the one being coached. This demonstrates support, rewards the struggle, and proves they aren't alone.
- ② **Analyze it** — is it within the boundaries of what you can handle? We want to feel the stretch, but not be pained.
- ③ **Leave it** — you may be tempted to bail someone out, but a good coach allows the discomfort so that learning and growth can happen. Instead, help them focus on the positive outcome.